



General Assembly

February Session, 2006

**Substitute Bill No. 5500**

\* HB05500HS\_APP032106 \*

**AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL READINESS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2006*) (a) The Commissioner of  
2       Social Services shall establish a competitive grant program to provide  
3       developmentally appropriate early care and education services,  
4       playgroups and child and family liaisons for the benefit of children  
5       under six years of age who reside in homeless shelters. Program  
6       objectives shall be designed to bolster the health and school readiness  
7       skills of young children who lack a residence due to poverty or  
8       domestic violence.

9       (b) Within available appropriations, the commissioner shall  
10      annually award up to three grants that shall be used to achieve the  
11      program objectives set forth in subsection (a) of this section. Grants  
12      shall be available for the following entities: (1) Day care centers to  
13      provide part-day and full-day program services for children described  
14      in subsection (a) of this section and to provide transportation for such  
15      children between such shelters and centers; and (2) home visitation  
16      providers, with expertise in methods for family strengthening and  
17      meeting the developmental needs of children, who shall provide  
18      playgroups to children described in subsection (a) of this section. Part-  
19      day and full-day program services provided pursuant to subdivision

20 (1) of this subsection shall include a prekindergarten curriculum,  
21 enrichment activities, mentoring, meals, mental health services,  
22 preventive medical services, including, but not limited to, hearing tests  
23 and any other component deemed necessary by the commissioner to  
24 achieve the program objectives set forth in subsection (a) of this  
25 section.

26 (c) Recipients of a grant under this section shall link children and  
27 families served under the grant, when appropriate, with assessment  
28 and referral services, which may include, but need not be limited to,  
29 health and learning services such as a medical home for the parent and  
30 child, mental health services, services under the birth-to-three program  
31 and nutrition assistance through the WIC program, as defined in  
32 section 17b-290 of the 2006 supplement to the general statutes.

33 (d) Any day care center or home visitation provider seeking a grant  
34 under this section shall apply to the commissioner at such time and in  
35 such manner as the commissioner prescribes.

36 (e) The commissioner may seek additional funding, for the purpose  
37 of providing grants under this section, through resources available  
38 pursuant to (1) the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,  
39 42 USC 11301, et seq., (2) philanthropic donations, and (3) other public  
40 and private sources, including, but not limited to, Medicaid.

41 (g) The commissioner shall develop and implement such  
42 competitive grant process in consultation with the Departments of  
43 Children and Families, Education and Public Health, the Commission  
44 on Children, the Child Day Care Council established under section  
45 17b-748 of the general statutes, and state-wide advocacy groups  
46 having expertise regarding children and homelessness. The  
47 commissioner shall establish criteria for the award of competitive  
48 grants established pursuant to this section. Criteria considered in the  
49 award of competitive grants shall include, but not be limited to,  
50 coordination with existing state and local healthcare, early intervention  
51 and family support services, demonstrated ability to leverage existing

52 financial resources, cultural competency, and a demonstrated  
53 competency in the development of a school readiness curriculum with  
54 attention to age appropriate literacy skills.

55 (h) Not later than January 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, the  
56 commissioner shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the  
57 general statutes, on the implementation and effectiveness of the  
58 competitive grant program, to the select committee of the General  
59 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children and to the  
60 Early Childhood Education Cabinet, established pursuant to section  
61 10-16s of the 2006 supplement to the general statutes.

62 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2006*) The sum of one hundred fifty thousand  
63 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Social Services, from the  
64 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, for the purpose  
65 of funding grants pursuant to section 1 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2006</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2006</i>	New section

<b>KID</b>	<i>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</i>	HS
<b>HS</b>	<i>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</i>	APP